New records of blind snakes resembling the robust blind snake *Anilios ligatus* (Peters 1879), on Cape York Peninsula.

Memoirs of the Queensland Museum - Nature 59: 8. 2014. Blind snakes are extremely secretive with numerous Australian species known from few specimens or localities (Vanderduys 2013). Two recent records of blind snakes morphologically resembling *Anilios ligatus* (until recently *Ramphotyphlops ligatus*; Hedges *et al.* 2014) occur much further north than previously recognised, 330 km and 525 km north, respectively, of the nearest records (Atlas of Living Australia 2013; fig. 1). The first (QMJ92808) 184 mm SVL, 8 mm tail length, (including spinose tip) was collected on the 8th of June 2010 at 13°39.09'S; 142°47.78'E in a funnel trap, during a survey of Oyala Thumotang (Mungkan Kandju) National Park. The trap site was located within tall open *Eucalyptus tetrodonta* woodland, with a *Melaleuca viridiflora* subcanopy on grey sandy soil. *Corymbia confertiflora*, *C. stockeri* and *Erythrophleum chlorostachys* were also common in the tree layer. There was a thick ground cover dominated by *Heteropogon triticeus* and *Sarga plumosum*. The area is mapped as being 50% Regional Ecosystem (RE) 3.5.7 x 2a: "*Eucalyptus tetrodonta* woodland on sand plains", mixed with other REs (Queensland Herbarium 2013) and our data conform to this description. The second specimen (QMJ93151) was collected in a pitfall bucket on the 27th of May 2013 at 12°03.22'S; 142°03.27'E during fauna surveys approximately 70 km north of Weipa, on the western side of Cape York Peninsula. The trap site was located within tall open forest dominated by *Eucalyptus tetrodonta* on hard soils consisting of dry orange loam with bauxite. *Erythrophleum chlorostachys* and *Corymbia nesophila* were also present in the tree layer, while the ground layer was dominated by *Eulalia mackinlayi*, *Heteropogon triticeus*, *Sarga plumosum* and *Schelhammera multiflora*. The area is mapped as Regional Ecosystem 3.5.2: "*Eucalyptus tetrodonta* and *Corymbia nesophila* tall woodland on deeply weathered plateaus and remnants" (Queensland Herbarium 2013) and the site conforms well to this description. Based on available identification keys in Cogger (2000) and Wilson (2005) both specimens are clearly morphologically *A. ligatus* as currently understood. Examination of the specimens by Dr Andrew Amey (Queensland Museum) confirmed this. However, recent genetic work on specimens from nearly 2000 km (south) and over 700 km (west; straight line, across the Gulf of Carpentaria) from our Cape York Peninsula specimens (fig. 1) has shown that *A. ligatus* is both paraphyletic and polyphyletic indicating the presence of cryptic species (Marin *et al.* 2013). The genetic affiliation of the Cape York Peninsula specimens requires further investigation. The nominal *A. ligatus* taxa presented in Marin *et al.* (2013), the disjunct distributions of many reptilian taxa, and similar distribution of non-reptilian taxa across the Carpentaria Barrier (e.g. Kikkawa 1969; Blacket *et al.* 2001), suggests that many species currently recognised as occurring across the monsoonal tropics may be rich in cryptic taxa, providing a fertile ground for further taxonomic studies.

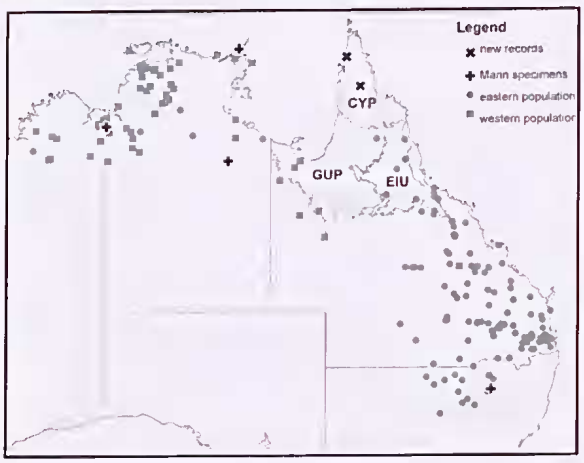

FIG. 1. Known records of *Anilios ligatus* in proximity to individuals collected on Cape York, Queensland (new records ×). Four genetically tested specimens are marked (+). Relevant Bioregional boundaries are shown: CYP = Cape York Peninsula, EIU = Einasleigh Uplands, GUP = Gulf Plains. Data collected from Atlas of Living Australia, Atlas of NSW Wildlife and Marin *et al.* (2013).

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